

*Commentary*

# **Rational call from developing countries: China phobia brings unbearable weight to the world**

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Napoleon announced, "China is a sleeping lion. Once awoken, it will shock the world." Because of what Napoleon said, "China Wave Theory" came into being, but in turn "China Phobia" was born.

Historically, there are "Islamophobia" and "Russian phobia" in the west. And what is the difference between "China phobia" and other countries?

*China phobia*, co-authored by Karim Alwadi and Mohammed Kheir ALWADI in the form of dialogues, has just been published in Penguin Press, which has aroused widespread concern at home and abroad. The two authors of this book are father and son. Mohammed Kheir Alwadi was the Syrian ambassador to China Dean of the Arab diplomatic corp to Beijing; His son Karim AlWadi, formerly known as "China Hand", is now referred to as "Mr. Phobia". He was educated at Renmin University of China and China Foreign Affairs University, and is Beijing based successful entrepreneur constantly. The authors point out that Washington stubbornly deems that China wants to grab global leadership from the United States. But they believe that China is not willing to play such a role. They wrote: "China is the only big country that has not launched a foreign war in the past 40 years ... Simultaneously; it also opposes alliance and provoking military conflicts." They also wrote that no one evidence that Beijing is trying to impose its governance model on other countries. No country is forced to accept predatory loans because of "the belt and road initiative"; In fact, many countries have benefited from related infrastructure construction.

The author wonders. However, in the surrounding areas, Japan is turning to a more outward-oriented defense policy and increasing its military spending substantially; Australia, Britain and the United States announced a new defense agreement "AUKUS". People cannot help but ask who are all these ever-increasing measures against?

It can be seen that, unlike Islamophobia and Russophobia which have profound historical memories to the west, China phobia in the west is an imaginary inference caused by a lack of understanding of Chinese civilization and China's system, and it is empathy of future fear in uncertain times. People are curious, what is the difference between "China phobia" and "China threat theory"?

"China phobia" exists not only in the west, but also in developing countries, with different meanings. However, it is the fear of China's future development and the fear of China's rapid, huge and deep rise, and it is self-perception. Unlike the "China threat theory", it is an assertion concocted by the media, scholars and politicians, taking into account subjective and objective feelings.

The book holds that the US trade war against China is unfair, and its purpose is to "prevent China from catching up with the global industrial revolution". There is misunderstanding between China and the United States, but demonization is unilateral. The War Hawk in the United States is disappointed because China has not turned to the western political system after its economic advance. But this does not mean that people should worry about the peaceful rise of a country that has never sought global dominance.

As US President Barack Obama said in an interview with Australian TV on April 15th, 2010, "If more than one billion China residents live like Australians and Americans do now, all of us will be in a very miserable situation, because it is

unbearable for the planet".<sup>1</sup> It's very valuable that the authors' do not blame both sides indiscriminately about the misunderstanding between China and the West, but explores its historical and cultural roots and psychological basis, and analyzes the conflict between Chinese and Western values. It can be called a representative work with the third-party perspective and the third eye observing China. The authors observe China from a peaceful point of view, not overlooking from an alien's point of view. They are within, and without, which deserves high attention from China and the world. The author reckons. China's phobia, which combines Russian phobia, yellow peril theory, clash of civilizations theory and China threat theory, is the loss of the world. The subtitle of this book is "A wasted opportunity". In the spirit of being good to the world and the future, the author reveals that "China phobia" brings unbearable weight to the world, which can be described as the unity of inner knowledge and action of the new era.

The characteristic of this book is that it has risen from China's threat theory to China's fear theory. By way of father-son dialogue, combined with the latest cases, it explains the profound things in simple terms continuously and pleasantly. This kind of dialogue is actually a dialogue between the future and the reality. Other than other books on China, the author looks at tomorrow from the day after tomorrow instead of yesterday. As a Syrian with an ancient civilization, facing the tragedy of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, is the author reminding the world that suffer will be present if you don't listen to the elder?

Another major feature of this book is the neutral perspective observation. It is neither a bystander nor an apologist of China's phobia. It objectively and calmly analyzes the mechanism of "China's phobia" and points out that there are no absolute winners and losers. In fact, the entire world is the losers of "China's phobia".

The third feature is to analyze the social psychology of phobia from the cognitive phenomenon of China in daily life in recent years, such as the historical and cultural factors behind the trade war, intellectual property rights, the belt and road initiative, Xinjiang, epidemic prevention and control, etc. The differences between China's DNA and the West are discussed, involving the deep reasons such as Confucian culture and political system, and Sinology and China Studies are combined well.

Considering the epidemic situation, how did the China paradox in the western discourse system evolve into China phobia? The Black Death in the Middle Ages claimed 1/3 of the lives of Europeans. Historical research shows that people did two things in the panic of plague at that time. One was to dance the dance of death together, and the other was to condemn Jews for bringing viruses. Today, this situation has come back, except that Jews have been replaced by Chinese.

In this regard, the book analyzes that China's phobia actually reflects China's dilemma: First, the epidemic situation is indeed the bottom line. Once there is an epidemic situation, considering the high infectivity, all localities must stop and calm down, and all kinds of economic factors can't move. It's actually unrealistic (the requirements are contradictory) for local governments to make overall plans for economic development and epidemic prevention and control, and the economic indicators can't be achieved overnight. Therefore, this year's economic indicators are very difficult to come true. Apart from that, the epidemic is dedicated to dealing with all kinds of disobedient, such as rapid variation, hidden spread, being difficult to trace to the source, being out of nowhere, and suddenly appearance. As a result, all localities are exhausted and overwhelmed. Meanwhile, even if they make plenty of training plans, they will be at a loss in actual combat. Third, it is very difficult to continue to implement the current policy, and relaxation faces a dilemma. Foreign countries are relaxed, and domestic countries should avoid the "isolated island" effect and bear enormous external pressure. At the same time, even if the severe disease rate and mortality rate of the 5<sup>th</sup> Wave pandemic are reduced, multiplied by the huge population of China, it is an unbearable burden for China, which may endanger the ruling foundation, and it is not dare or easy to try. However, if we persist, the economic cost and people's endurance may also lead to the crisis. What a dilemma!!

This kind of analysis is rather valuable, and it can be said that it exceeds the cognitive level of most people in China. The author, Karim's father is a former Syrian ambassador to China. His mother is Russian, and his wife is from China. It can be said that he is the best person to analyze this topic. Today he is called "Mr. Phobia", which is a mixture of Islamophobia, Russian phobia and China phobia. The world's multi-faceted views to China in the diversified background and the changing world observing the strange situation of China, makes this book a rare best-selling book for the study of China studies in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Kerrie O'Brien. Face to Face with Obama. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010-04-15.[2021-03-21] <https://www.abcnet.au/7.30/face-to-face-with-obama/2673356>.